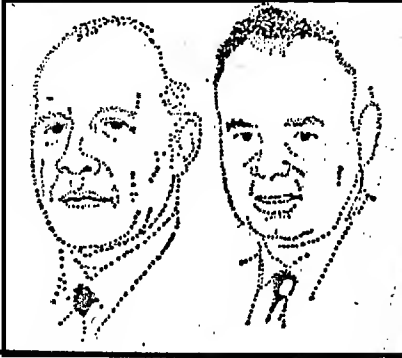


ALLEN - SCOTT REPORT

Inside Washington

By ROBERT S. ALLEN and PAUL SCOTT



LBJ Backs Poll Tax

CPYRGHT

WASHINGTON — President Johnson is telling his top congressional leaders he personally favors including a flat ban against state poll taxes in the voting rights bill.

This private declaration puts him directly counter to the public stand of Atty. Gen. Katzenbach—who holds such a provision is unconstitutional.

Largely on the basis of Katzenbach's legal judgment, the Senate rejected 49 to 45 an amendment by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., outlawing state poll taxes. The fight against it was led by the Democratic and Republican leaders of the chamber — Sen. Mike Mansfield, D-Mont., Everett Dirksen, R-Ill.

The President disclosed his backstage sentiments during a discussion of the House voting rights bill at a White House conference with the congressional leaders. The measure includes a strong anti-poll tax provision.

"I would like to see that passed and become law," said the President.

FIRST CLUE

This was the first time he had given any clue to his views on this hotly controversial issue. Prior to and throughout the Senate's long consideration of the voting rights legislation, the President maintained a drum-tight silence. He gave no hint of how he felt.

Apparently, his lips were unlocked by the action of the House Judiciary Committee approving a ban on state poll taxes in its voting rights measure — tentatively slated to be considered by the full chamber later this month.

When the startled congressional leaders learned of the President's explanation that Katzenbach had voiced opposing

legal opinion without the President's knowledge or approval. This occurred in response to questions during a televised interview.

"Under these circumstances," said the President, "I had no alternative but to remain silent or fire my attorney general."

A DEADLOCK

Speaker John McCormack, D-Mass., beamingly hailed the President's stand.

"I'm delighted to hear you say you are against state poll taxes," he exclaimed. "That is exactly the way I feel, and why I have been wholeheartedly supporting the Judiciary Committee despite the attorney general's legal opinion and the Senate's rejection of the anti-poll tax amendment. We had no idea how you felt about this, so it's extremely gratifying to know we see eye-to-eye."

"The attorney general is not for poll taxes," pointed out Johnson. "He is as much against them as you and I are. But he is convinced state poll taxes cannot be eradicated by act of Congress. I don't agree with him. I favor outlawing all poll taxes, and would like to see the enactment of the House bill striking them down in the five states that still have them."

"But, as I have indicated, my hands are partly tied. I can't very well publicly disagree with my attorney general."

BEST COURSE

"I knew you were in for trouble when I heard that TV interview," said McCormack. "Katzenbach should have skirted that question. He should not have taken a public position until he had discussed his legal opinion with you."

Senate Democratic Leader Mansfield warned there is little likelihood the Senate will back down on its opposition to an anti-poll tax ban.

"The Senate conferees will stand pat on their approach to the poll tax issue," declared Mansfield. "That calls for the attorney general's initiating court action against state poll taxes. The attorney considers that the soundest way to proceed, and so does a majority of the Senate. I don't think there is any chance of the Senate's accepting the House's outright ban against state poll taxes."

"I fully agree with that estimate," said Vice President Humphrey. "I know positively the Senate conferees intend to hold fast. If there is going to be voting rights legislation, a compromise will have to be worked out."

"We will cross that bridge when we come to it," declared Speaker McCormack.

The President told the legislative leaders he was very eager to have the measure enacted so it could be signed on July 4.

"That would be very fitting," he said, "a new Declaration of Independence."

GOOD JOBS

Behind that determined Senate fight against changing the law to permit retired Gen. William McKee to become head of the Federal Aviation Agency are other big-name targets.

The bipartisan group waging this battle, spearheaded by Sens. Vance Hartke, D-Ind., and James Pearson, R-Kans., also is gunning for the following:

Gen. Maxwell Taylor, ambassador to South Viet Nam; Adm. George Anderson, ambassador to Portugal; Adm. Jerauld R. Wright, ambassador to Nations

alist China; Gen. Herbert Powell, ambassador to New Zealand; Adm. W. F. Raborn, director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The first four draw more than \$39,000 in combined salary and pension. Raborn's total is \$38,000; \$39,000 as CIA head, \$8,000 as a retired admiral.

In an unnoticed report prepared for the Senate Commerce Committee, of which he is a ranking member, Hartke assails these high incomes as excessive and unfair to civilian appointees occupying comparable positions.

Hartke is indicating a vigorous challenge will be made against the continued appointment of retired military officers to top government jobs. He is preparing a detailed list showing such appointees run into the thousands — with President Johnson naming the largest number.